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Bremer's Target Nixon Or Wallace

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (AP) — Arthur Bremer decided last March to assassinate either President Nixon or Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace, a psychiatrist testified Wednesday. Dr. Eugene B. Brody of Baltimore described Bremer as a dispassionate schizophrenic, both methodical and careless, and rejected by a teen-age girl.

"He fantasized that when he fired his gun at President Nixon or Gov. Wallace, he would cry out, 'A penny for your thoughts,'" Brody testified during the third day of Bremer's trial in Prince Georges County Circuit Court.

Brody, a defense witness, said he considered the 21-year-old defendant legally insane when, as prosecution eyewitnesses said, he wounded Wallace and three other persons with a pistol May 15 at a Laurel, Md., shopping center.

His opinion was in direct conflict with prosecution psychiatrists, who said Tuesday that while Bremer had a mental disorder and was mixed up, he could, as Maryland insanity law requires, appreciate the criminality of his conduct and could conform to the law.

While Brody maintained that the former busboy and school janitor was a schizophrenic, the prosecution doctors said Bremer had the less-severe disorder known as schizoid personality.

Bremer has pleaded innocent by reason of insanity to a 17-count indictment arising from the shootings.

Brody, head psychiatrist at the University of Maryland Medical School, said he based his conclusion on a two-hour interview with Bremer, talks with Bremer's parents, reports

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from prosecution psychiatrists and a diary Bremer began keeping earlier this year.

The 114-page diary, the jury was told, detailed Bremer's moods, and a "cross-country pursuit of President Nixon" and an attempt to shoot Wallace that was aborted when two teen-age girls stepped in front of Bremer's gun.

A second defense psychiatrist, Dr. Sheila Hafter Gray, said she considered Bremer to be a legally insane, latent schizophrenic affected by a "very serious blurring of the bounds between fantasy and reality.

"I believe he should be committed to a mental hospital to protect himself from his suicidal tendencies and to protect society from his homicidal tendencies," she testified.

She said she had difficulty believing Bremer's admission to her that he shot Wallace and took the defendant's statements "with a big spoonful of salt."

She testified Bremer strove to become important to gain his mother's love and that "his idea to kill the president ... was to impress her and have her look up to him."

The witness said she recalled Bremer making the following "childish pleading" during a recent visit by his parents to his cell at the adjacent county jail:

"Will you come to my trial? It's going to be a big trial. They've got a special cell for me. The press is going to be there. I'm going to be important."

Part of his search for importance was the making of money, she testified, adding that Bremer once told her he wanted to sell his story to Time-Life Inc. for $100,000.

Brody said he had isolated four distinct emotional crises in Bremer's life, the first at age 9, when against his wishes, his family moved on short notice.

The second came about nine years later when Bremer, heretofore submissive at home, began challenging his parents, complaining about food and conditions and finally moving away, according to the doctor.

The third event, he said, the "main crisis" in Bremer's life: His rejection last winter by 16-year-old Joan Pembroke of Milwaukee, described in earlier testimony as the first and only person to whom Bremer had tried to relate closely.

Brody quoted Bremer as saying his two weeks of dating were "the happiest of my life," but once spurned he shaved his head and confronted her in an effort to make her "stop in her tracks."

Brody said the rejection first led to a plan to commit mass murders and suicide in Milwaukee and, when this was not carried out, to a mind-purging decision.

"His rejection by his girl friend was terminated by his decision to assassinate the President," said Brody, who did not detail dates and places of diary entries.

The fourth emotional stage, the psychiatrist continued, came between early March and May 15 as Bremer's writing complains of apparently imagined physical ailments, discusses suicide and displays "a growing crisis and a lack of control."

Brody testified that while Bremer paid elaborate attention to detail at some times, such as trying to purify his car of gunpowder traces — at other times he deliberately acted as though to risk capture.

"Suicidal fantasies and gestures have constituted a life's theme from his earliest days to his present," Brody said.

THE DEFENSE – Dr. Eugene B. Brody, Baltimore psychiatrist, right, talks with Benjamin Lipsitz, the court appointed attorney for Arthur Bremer, while leaving the courthouse in Upper Marlboro. Brody, during his testimony as a defense witness, described Bremer as a dispassionate schizophrenic, both methodical and careless, and rejected by a teen-age girl.–(AP Wirephoto)